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# Exploring Creative Problem Solving in Public Policy

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Exploring Creative Problem Solving in Public Policy  
By

Jade Costello

An Abstract of a Project  
In  
Individualized Multidisciplinary Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2018

Buffalo State  
State University of New York  
Department of Creative Studies

## ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

### Exploring Creative Problem Solving in Public Policy

This project explores the connection between creativity and public policy-making through guided facilitation. In this exploration, there are several products that have been developed. The first is an index that provides definitions, charts, and process explanations for creativity, facilitation and public policy. The second is a completed facilitation plan that incorporates both the FourSight model for group facilitation (Miller, Vehar, Firestein, Thurber & Nielsen, 2011a) and Marvin Weisbord's (1992) exploration of creative strategies for discovering common ground through policy conferences. The third product is an evaluation matrix, which would be used post-facilitation to understand the strengths and weaknesses from the process group. This project is a foundational approach to bringing creative problem solving to the different key players in policy making.

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Date

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Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers  
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## SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

### **Purpose and Description of Project**

This paper seeks to explore the processes, theories, and key players of public policy in the United States as well as examine the current problems the system faces, integrating creative problem-solving solutions wherever appropriate. Currently, in the United States, public policy tackles the most compelling and personal problems impacting the average citizen. Policy seeks to address the needs of the nation through effective articulation and disbursement of resources. The more prominent policy issues today are broadcasted 24/7, 365 days a year on television, the internet and through personal devices by not only legacy media, but also from independent sources and social media.

Almost everyone has access to these media devices therefore, everyone has an opinion about policy and the political process. Today, there is a lot of miscommunication between government and citizen which causes tension and mistrust. There are many opposing forces, interest groups, and cries of injustice. Ultimately, humanitarian needs are unmet in great part, due to inefficient policy creation and articulation. There are many factors that contribute to this controversy. Both the lack of information to poor definition of the actual problems are just two examples of the roots of inefficient policy.

It is almost impossible to avoid the connection with the policy creation process and creative problem solving. Because it is a dynamic process which includes multiple parties, creative strategy can be a critical element missing in strategic decision making and policy creation. The purpose of this project is to explore different viewpoints, learn about the weakening areas in public government, and ultimately to propose specific ways in which creative



problem-solving techniques can be practically and strategically implemented in times of controversy to create more effective policy and positively impact society.

### **Personal Goals**

This project pushes me out of my comfort zone because it is completely different from my professional domain and expertise in marketing and advertising. Personally, I want to challenge myself and apply my knowledge to this issue. In my opinion, creative problem-solving ideology and skills such as divergent and convergent thinking can be applied to any problem. This project will provide evidence that by integrating these skills as well as design thinking, shared vision, collaborative action and others can be applied to this seemingly rigid system. I would like to inspire further research into this field and collaborate with professionals to see where we can facilitate creative problem solving with policy makers to understand specifically where communicative and strategic problems are arising in a practical way. Since there is little research that directly investigates creative problem solving and public policy, future areas could include more specific policy areas. This will test my leadership qualities as well as my ability to make analogies between different domains of knowledge. I want to pioneer new thinking which is truly a cumulative integration of each graduate course I have taken in both multidisciplinary and creative studies.

### **Rationale for Selection**

Ultimately, I would like to become a government problem solving consultant, therefore this project will jump start my knowledge and guide me to figuring out where I can aid in the decision making and policy making processes. I want to make an impact on society and innovate our policy system in order to give disadvantaged, poor, or undereducated people the opportunity to participate in changing their world as well. I don't believe the American Dream is dead, but I

do think it could be easier to attain through new effective and innovative policy. Therefore, this project has deep personal meaning to me, but I want it to also stimulate an interest in others to try and change their communities for the betterment of themselves and others. If I can do it, with a little hard work, others can too.

## SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE AND RESOURCES

The following pieces of literature are useful to the research in this project because they build the foundational groundwork to understanding what public policy really means, and the different strategies that can be used to innovate its systems and flaws. Some of the pieces criticize the ways in which we create policy, while others give a historical context to why things are the way are. I also chose pieces that exemplify creative problem solving in similar contexts to this research, to build analogy between the domains of public policy and creativity.

### **Annotated Literature**

Burns, J. M. (1958). Some conclusions on the study of public policy. In Peltason, J. W., &

Burns, J. M. (Eds.), *Functions and policies of american government: Big democracy in action* (pp 418-429). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

This chapter describes the group approach to policy making, how intra-group conflicts make policy and how policies make groups. It also explores the relationship between leadership and policy and defines the total environment for policy making.

Kelman, S. (1987). *Making public policy: A hopeful view of american government*. New York, NY: Basicbooks.

This book evaluates the policy making process by breaking it into two parts, how it works and how well it works. Unlike more critical pieces, this book provides hopeful insight for change and evolution of the process. It also examines public behaviour and its relation to legislation and policy creation.

Lipsitz, L. (1967) *American government: Behavior and controversy*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

This book is filled with selected readings that pertain to aspects of governmental

policy-making as well as critiques in political participation, and issues such as voting, political parties, free speech and equal rights. This is important because it provides another viewpoint on weaknesses in the government systems of policy making. These issues and controversies drive the need for creative problem-solving skills and tools.

Peltason, J. W. (1958). An approach to the study of public policy. In Peltason, J. W., & Burns, J. M. (Eds.), *Functions and policies of american government: Big democracy in action* (pp 1-15). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

This is a defining chapter of the policy process. Specifically, how policy relates to interest groups and conflict, the role of government in the policy process, and how politicians play a role in the process, democracy and tactics and trends.

Peters, C. (1980). *How Washington really works*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

This book aims to examine the system of politics and government in the United States. Peters has inside knowledge of Washington DC from being the editor in chief of The Washington Monthly. He uses his insight to explore the problems of the Washington political culture, by diving into lobbyists, the press, bureaucracy, courts and regulators and congress. This book inspires change within the system and exposes flaws in government functions such as legislation and policy making.

Richardson, E (1976). *The creative balance: Government, politics, and the individual in america's third century*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

This book gives case studies and historical examples of creativity and equality. It Basically shows examples from American history where equality was achieved through creative practices and policy making. There are hundreds of examples in this book, and it

gives an excellent perspective and context of where and when creativity can be applied to societal change.

Swartz, W. G (1961). Too much red tape: The problem of simplifying our legislative process. In Swartz, W. G. (2nd Eds.), *American governmental problems* (pp 154-173). Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc.

This chapter gives a historical indication of why the United States legislative process is so complicated, and how it is shifting to a simpler process. This seems like a beneficial circumstance; however, it does have negative consequences of our government actions and implications to policy making. Swartz explains the unanticipated complications with simplifying this process such as hastily legislation leading to “railroading tactics”, and filibustering.

Weisbord, M. R. (1992). *Discovering common ground: How future search conferences bring people together to achieve breakthrough innovation, empowerment, shared vision, and collaborative action*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Weisbord outlines this book to have three main purposes. The first is to show how to use strategic conferences, based on common ground to improve planning between sectors of business, government, labor, health care and education. The second is how to utilize self-management and lead committed action. And the third, to build democratic social values and core concepts under task-focused techniques.

### Additional Resources

- Ackoff, R. L. (1974). *Redesigning the future*. New York, NY: Wiley
- Considine, M. (2012). Thinking outside the box? Applying design theory to public policy. *Politics & Policy*, 40(4), 704-724.
- Hofferbert, R. I. (1974). *The study of public policy*, New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.
- Jones, B. D. (1994). *Reconceiving decision-making in democratic politics: Attention, choice and public policy*. Chicago. IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Mercer, D. (1997). Robust strategies in a day. *Management Decision*. 35(3), 219-223.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/00251749710169422>
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestein, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011a). *Creativity unbound: An introduction to creative process* (5th ed). Evanston, IL: FourSight, LLC.
- Miller, B., Vehar, J., Firestein, R., Thurber, S., Nielsen, D. (2011b). *Facilitation: A door to creative leadership* (4th ed.). Evanston, IL: FourSight, LLC.
- Monsma, S. (1973). *American politics a systems approach*, Hinsdale, IL: The Dryden Press.
- Nagel, S. S. (2000). *Creativity and public policy: Generating super-optimum solutions*. Burlington, VA: Ashgate.
- Nagel, S. S. (2002). *Policy creativity: New perspectives*. New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
- Salter, J. D. (2009). The digital workshop: Exploring the use of interactive and immersive visualisation tools in participatory planning. *Journal of Environmental Management*. (90)6. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvman.2007.08.023
- Slaughter, R. A. (2004). Road testing a new model at the Australian foresight institute. *Futures*. (36)8. 837-852. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2004.01.010>.

Slonim, Ori. (2017). National intelligence: A tool for political forecasting and the forecasting of rare events. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*.

doi: 10.1016/j.techfore.2017.04.019.

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4, 155-169.

Sirianni, C. (2017). Civic innovation: Yesterday, today, and tomorrow. *Perspectives on Politics*, 15(1), 122-128. doi:10.1017/S1537592716004187

Puccio, G. J., Mance, M., Murdock, M. C., (2011). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change*. Thousand Oaks: CA. SAGE Publications, Inc.

The focus of these resources in my research is to define the key terms, players, historical context, and identify creative problem-solving tools that will integrate in a useful way to public policy practices. These resources will be crucial in defining terms in the index as well as providing a solid base to conceptualize creative problem solving's role in public policy.

### SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

#### **Plan to Achieve Goals and Outcomes**

To achieve my goals, I plan on using a wide array of primary and secondary research tools such as interviews, and research into policy creation to exploit weaknesses in the systems that are in place today. I will work on an index defining key terms, players, decision making strategies, creative problem-solving facilitation strategies and systems of policy creation and implementation. Since there is not one specific way that policy is made, this index will be crucial to develop thoroughly to be a bedrock for the rest of the project.

I plan on utilizing current creative problem-solving strategies and trends to integrate into a trending policy creation scenario such as education reform. This will be done in a research-based scenario backed by literary support, followed by a discussion piece reflecting on where there needs to be further exploration.

I would like to get in contact with a professional that has experience with creative problem solving and public administration and host a discussion with that person. This will provide in-depth insights that will uncover a lot of misconceptions and highlight what is actually needed in today's current government landscape. I would also like to follow up with this individual with a facilitation plan, to get feedback on how useful it could be for future scenarios.

This project will be made up of a variety of different documents that will all cohesively provide evidence for the need for creativity in policy innovation.



### **Project Timeline**

- February 28- March 1
  - Project Concept Paper Completed
    - 10 Hrs
- March 2- March 10
  - Develop Discussion Questions
  - Schedule Discussion if Available
    - If not available, complete by March 31
      - 10 Hrs
- March 15 Sections 1-3 Complete
- March 11- March 20
  - Index of key terms completed
    - Key terms
    - Key Players
    - Decision Making Strategies
    - CPS Facilitations Defined
    - Case Studies Analyzed
    - Current policy making strategies/ Trends
    - Decision Making Strategies
  - 20 Hrs
- March 20- April 20
  - Main Research Paper Completed
    - Index
    - Current Policy Problem Scenarios

- Discussion
  - 40 Hrs
- Evaluation plan written up
  - Facilitation plan
  - Put together the project
    - 15 Hrs
- April 24, Sections 4-6 Due
- Final May 1
- Sign Off May 7

### **Evaluation Plan**

Learning goals will be evaluated in two different ways. The first will be a reflection piece of what was learned and how to implement the lessons learned in a professional context. The next will be a facilitation plan for future use. The facilitation plan will include the strategies that have been explained and researched in the index of terms, key players, and strategies. This plan will be the capstone of the project and will be made with the intention to use in the real situations. I would like to bring this plan to the professional that I speak to in phase one of the project to get personal feedback or ideas of improvement. This would be a formal feedback evaluation. I will provide a questionnaire along with the facilitation plan for that individual to complete and hand back. I will also provide the questionnaire and project to a creativity professional to get feedback on how well the plan is formulated and how well it would hold up in a real facilitation. Informal feedback or benchmarks will be in the form of engaging in quick

logging of progress and learning outcomes each week. This feedback will provide insights in the journey of my master's project and show how much work and detail will be put into every week and step of the process.

## SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

Section four consists of three products that have been made to explore the connections between public policy making and creative problem solving. They are the Key Term Index, Facilitation Strategy, and Evaluation Matrix. These products represent the beginning, middle, and end of this project by first building a foundation of contextual information, then utilizing that information by creating the facilitation template, and finally evaluating the positive and negative results of the facilitation with the evaluation matrix. These products are exploratory and malleable. They are the basis for future research and configuration for specific scenarios.

### **Index Key Terms**

#### **Creativity**

The production of ideas or options that are both new and useful (Puccio et al., 2011).

#### **Creativity in Public Policy Evaluation**

Finding alternative ways of dealing with public policy that are better than those which have previously been proposed. The relevant criteria may include effectiveness, efficiency, equity, public participation, predictability, procedural due process or other specific criteria (Nagel, 2000).

#### **Creative Problem Solving (CPS)**

A comprehensive cognitive and affective system built on our natural creative processes that deliberately ignites creative thinking, and, as a result, generates creative solutions and change (Puccio et al., 2011).

CPS influences how people think about the world and themselves in relation to change and improves individual and team performance for problems that have no immediate solution (Puccio et al., 2011).

### **Pareto Malimum Solution**

Nobody is better off and at least one side is worse off (Nagel, 2000).

### **Pareto Optimum Solution**

Nobody comes out worse off and at least one side comes out better off (Nagel, 2000).

### **Politics**

The policy-making process. The total process whereby inputs flow into the political system, are converted into authoritative outputs, and in turn affect the inputs flowing into the political system. (Monsma, 1973).

### **Political Culture**

A nation's people's politically relevant attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments. It provides their underlying assumptions and beliefs which help determine the context within which the political system operates (Monsma, 1973).

### **Problem**

What exists when there is a gap between what you have and what you want (Puccio et al., 2011).

Problems that leaders face are ill-defined (no single solution path), novel (the situation is ever changing or new), and complex (information is missing, or it is difficult to determine what is relevant. (Mumford et al., 2000).

### **Super Optimizing Creativity**

Finding alternative ways of dealing with problems that exceed expectations simultaneously of conservatives, liberals and other major viewpoints on whatever the policy problem is using their own criteria and relative weights for those criteria (Nagel, 2000).

### **Super Optimum Solutions (SOS)**

One that is simultaneously best on two separate sets of goals. One set is a liberal set and the second set is a conservative set. They may share many or all of the goals, but they are likely to differ in terms of the relative weights they give to the same goals (Nagel, 2000).

Goes beyond settlement mediation and win-win negotiation by emphasizing the possibility and desirability of each side in a dispute coming out ahead of their best expectation.

Philosophies SOS stems from relate to supply-side economics, industrial policy and other forms of expansionist thinking (Nagel, 2000).

### **System**

A functional process that possesses two distinguishing characteristics: Differentiation (the existence of distinct units) and integration (the interaction of the units in order to perform the functions of the system) (Monsma, 1973).

### **Systems Theory**

“Every problem interacts with other problems and is therefore part of a system of interrelated problems, a system of problems . . . I choose to call such a system a mess . . . The solution to a mess can seldom be obtained by independently solving each of the problems of which it is composed . . . Efforts to deal separately with such aspects of urban life as transportation, health, crime, and education seem to aggravate the total situation.”

(Adapted from Ackoff, 1974, p. 21)

## **Wicked Problems**

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no “stopping rule” (i.e., no definitive solution).
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true or false, but good or bad.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every (attempted) solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation”; the results cannot be readily undone, and there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error.
6. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
7. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
8. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
9. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways.
10. The planner has no “right to be wrong” (i.e., there is no public tolerance of experiments that fail).

(Rittel & Webber, 1973)

## **Win-Lose Solution**

One side wins, the other side loses. The net effect is zero when the losses are subtracted from the gains. This is the typical litigation dispute when one ignores the litigation costs (Nagel, 2000).

## **Index Key Players**

### **Executive Behavior**

Presidents, governors, and the occupants of bureaucratic or “administrative” posts.

The primary initiators of the policy process. They have a strong command over the policy-nominating process. His or her stance toward policy is more anticipatory than reactive when compared to the legislator. Ideas are “nationalized”, and there are a range of policy options open to an executive. Examines suggestions from many agencies. Policy nomination is automated to the extent that changes enhance but do not fundamentally challenge existing structures (Hofferbert, 1974).

### **Courts and Judges**

Courts work within the confines of their own prior interpretations of relevant restraints and authority. Courts deal with the complexities of society, encountering the the difficult facets of social change and conflict between groups. The Supreme Court translates political philosophy into public policy (Hofferbert, 1974).

### **Facilitator**

The “process expert”. The person (or team of people) responsible for monitoring and directing group process. The facilitator makes CPS process decisions based on the client’s input (Miller, Vehar, Firestein, Thurber, Nielsen 2011b).

The facilitator establishes a supportive environment; are interested in others; are confident and flexible; remain affirmative and objective (Miller et al., 2011b).

### **Legislators**



Candidates, labeled by the programs they approve, stand for office. After the election, formal and personal behaviors are so structured that the policy projections of the winners are enacted into law and administered as promised (Hofferbert, 1974).

Further devolution occurs through the committee system and seniority rule. Each committee within the legislature has a virtual veto. The rules of the committee membership and authority offer no guarantee of representation for interests affected by such policies over which it has authority (Hofferbert, 1974).

\*\*Policy planning and coordination between executive and legislature are seen as collaborative but are more often competitive. Instead of unified policy formation, the proponents of more responsible parties view the legislature and the executive as serving dissimilar constituencies (Hofferbert, 1974).

Presidents and governors are elected by the nation or state; while congressmen and legislatures are elected by district. Cooperation among branches rests on compromise and bargaining (Hofferbert, 1974).

## **Resource Group**

The resource group supports the client by providing ideas, energy, insight, and fresh perspectives to the CPS session (Miller et al., 2011)

In addition, the resource group provides energy and enthusiasm; contribute to the flow of ideas; build on the ideas of others; understand the roles and act appropriately (Miller et al., 2011).

## **Index Strategies**

## **Conflict Resolution**

A system-maintenance function of public policy. The decision-making process of a political system provides for and encourages negotiation and compromise among conflicting points of view, it is aiding the successful resolution of conflicts (Monsma, 1973).

## **Creating Legitimacy**

The people's conviction that the political system is legitimate and that they ought to obey its decisions. No political system can be sustained solely by coercion (Monsma, 1973).

## **Generating Support**

A function that is crucial to be performed successfully in order for the political system to survive for any length of time (Monsma, 1973).

## **Horizon Scanning**

The systematic examination of potential threats, opportunities and likely future developments which are at the margins of current thinking and planning' and, continuing, horizon scanning may explore novel and unexpected issues, as well as persistent problems or trends (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2002).

## **Integral Futures**

Integrally informed futures practitioners have been emerging. Anyone who has read their work, spent time with them, listened to their accounts of working in organizations of all types, both public and private and noted the results cannot but be impressed. What distinguishes them is that they share several characteristics that emerge from 'growing into the field' through an Integral framework. For example, they:

- are very clear about their own immersion in, and debt to, particular cultural traditions;

- are keenly aware of their own values and perceptual filters;
- have a systematic overview of the main ‘reality domains’, how each interacts with the others and what methods of enquiry, tests of truth, are appropriate to each;
- have broad access to what I call the ‘infinite tool kit’ embracing a variety of related fields;
- are active in the process of reinvigorating traditional methods and evolving new ones;
- understand that ‘solutions’ emerge from complex processes of which they are a part and can seldom be pre-programmed; and, critically,
- work consciously from a post-conventional stance (Slaughter, 2004).

By becoming familiar with the uses and limitations of systems-related tools and approaches, futures practitioners can enhance their capacity for understanding how complex systems unfold through time. Equally, by developing the capacity to integrate methodologies that explore systems from the perspectives of communicative and emancipatory interests (as well as often-dominant technical interests) subsequent practices, decisions and actions will more effectively contribute toward preferred futures (Slaughter, 2004).

### **Interactive Modeling**

Recent innovation in integrated, scenario-based multi-criteria analysis methods employing both 2D information and 3D landscape visualizations to communicate the consequences and trade-offs associated with policy choices, may provide stakeholders with an enhanced understanding of planning alternatives and more meaningful opportunities for input (Salter, 2009).

### **The Political System and its Environment**

### *Inputs*

Flow into the political system from its environment.

*Support-* Accepting the decisions of the political system as being legitimate and obeying them

*Demands-* Sources and type of demand vary from general to specific. All indications of desires that certain decisions be made by the political decision makers.

*Expectations-* Ideas about how we expect government decision makers to act. Demands that are not often actively and consciously articulated and directly expressed.

### *Conversions*

Subsidiary functions of the overall function of the political system.

*Interest Representation-* The translating of demands and expectations into viable policy alternatives and giving them expression in the political system.

*Rule Initiation-* Making authoritative decisions that initiate or establish new rules or make basic changes in old ones.

*Rule Application-* Making authoritative decisions that apply generalized rules in specific situations.

*Rule Interpretation-* Making authoritative decisions that determine the intent of rules to settle conflicts that have arisen over their meaning.

### *Outputs*

Authoritative decisions that are applications or interpretations of rules.

(Monsma, 1973).

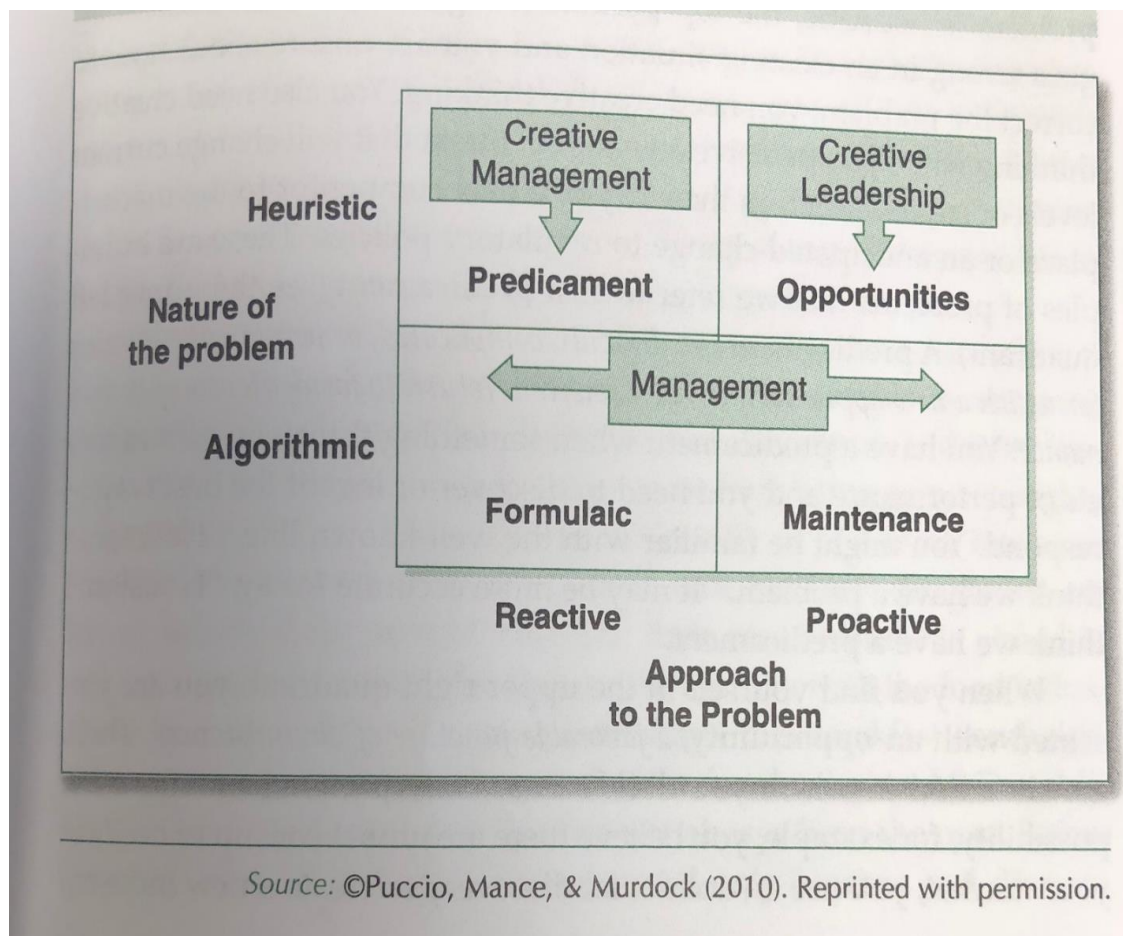
### **Political Decision Making**

Legitimate Authoritative ruling, therefore force or threat of force is behind them. Marked by the allocation of advantages and disadvantages for individuals. All political decisions are made for an entire society, not just for certain subsections (Monsma, 1973).

### **Technology Forecasting**

The relevance of political forecasting to technological forecasting is not direct. It is near-to-medium future forecast that helps to calibrate medium-to-long range technological forecasting, as additional dimension that many times may provide critical point of view to hegemonic technological trends which are perceived as deterministic.<sup>1</sup> These trends are manifested in many forms that are part of politics, e.g. regulation, tax policy, funding and other R&D targeting mechanisms; all may determine the course of basic and applied science. Furthermore, political events, especially military conflicts, turn politics to be more attentive to spending on R&D with defensive applications. Oil price is another field that from one side is sensitive to political developments and from the other side creates motivation or demotivation for technological progress in energy related areas, e.g. hydrogen fuel cells (Slonim, 2018).

**Figure 1. Types of Problems**



### **Nature of the Problem:**

#### *Heuristic Problem*

An open-ended problem. There is no set method to follow or obvious solution available.

#### *Algorithmic Problem*

Always lead to a correct answer.

### **Approach to the Problem**

Reactive or Proactive

### **Problem Scenarios**

When the two types of approaches to problems are crossed within the matrix, difference scenarios result.

#### *Formulaic*

A situation in which something changes or breaks down, and by simply following a process, it can be corrected entirely.

#### *Maintenance*

When you anticipate a future change that will negatively impact performance and you know what needs to be done to avoid negative consequence.

#### *Predicament*

Difficult, complicated, or perplexing situation for which a new approach must be devised to return former levels of performance.

#### *Opportunity*

A favorable juncture of circumstances Opportunity

(Puccio et al., 2010)

### **Scenario Planning**

The aim to identify a range of new threats and opportunities that arise across a set of plausible alternative scenarios, describe a range of possible consequences for candidate policies, help discover policy options demonstrably robust to long-term uncertainties and surface some of the blind-spots of an organizations' policy, or strategy (Mercer, 1997).

### **Super Optimum Solutions**

Does more than just find a new, better, or best alternative. It finds an alternative that's better than what the previous perspectives had as their best expectations, simultaneously across all the other previous perspectives. Super-optimizing creativity is closely related to *super-optimizing analysis*, which refers to methods that are useful in finding alternatives that can exceed the best expectation of all sides and viewpoints to disputes or dilemmas (Nagel, 2000).

Ways to arrive at super-optimum solutions:

- Expanding the resources available
- Setting higher goals
- One side can receive benefits, but the other side incurs only small costs

- Third-part benefactor (usually a government agency)
- Combining alternatives that are not mutually exclusive
- Removing or decreasing the source of conflict between liberals and conservatives, rather than trying to synthesize their separate proposals
- Developing a package of alternatives that would satisfy both liberal and conservative goals (Nagel, 2000).

### **Classifying Super-Optimum Solutions**

1. Whether or not super optimum goals are involved
2. Whether we are talking about dispute resolution or policy making
3. Whether we are talking about all sides coming out ahead of their best expectations, or coming out ahead in more absolute sense
4. A typology that emphasizes the ways of arriving at super optimum solutions, including
  - a. An alternative that involves small costs of one side and big benefits to the other;
  - b. The outside offer;
  - c. The combination alternative that does well on everybody's goals;
  - d. A package of items that does not simply involve combining the liberal and conservative alternatives into a new synthesis.
  - e. A super-optimum solution which involves removing the problem rather than trying to synthesize the liberal and conservative solutions.
5. Whether or not a third party is present as a mediator, arbitrator or adjudicator.
6. The situation can be classified by the substance or subject matter.



7. Whether or not the decision-aiding software is present
8. Ways of arriving at super-optimum solutions in terms of concentrating on the alternatives, the goals or a better sub-classification might be
  1. Developing a new alternative that is not a combination of the old alternatives;
  2. Developing a new alternative that is a combination of the old alternatives;
  3. Bringing a new goal which enables an old or new alternative to become super-optimum, which it would not be without the new goal.
9. Classifying the super-optimum solutions in terms of;
  1. Whether the solution is better or at least as good on all goals as the original alternatives. This is a solution that is dominating;
  2. Whether the solution is better than all the original alternatives on the summation score but not necessarily on every criterion. This is the non-dominating optimum solution;
  3. The non-dominating super-optimum solution that requires an additional goal to receive the highest summation score
10. The distinction can also be made between prescriptive and predictive SOS analysis. Prescriptive is concerned with determining the policy that should be adopted to enable conservatives, liberals, and other major viewpoints all to come out ahead of their best initial expectations determining the policy that will be adopted and why, or why a previously policy was adopted. The prescription-predictive categories roughly correspond to evaluative and explanatory or to normative and casual.

(Adapted from Nagel, 2000)

**Figure 2. Trends in Specific Policy Fields**

**Table 4 Some trends in specific policy fields**

Policy fields	Benefits for the have-nots	Benefits for the haves or all
Economic policy		
Labor	Better wages, hours, working conditions No child labor. Less discrimination	Stimulus to labor-saving technology. Happier and more productive workers
Consumer	More rights concerning product liability	Stimulus to prove better products & greater sales
Political–Legal Policy		
Free speech	More rights in politics, art and commerce	Stimulus to creativity
Due process & criminal justice	More rights to counsel, notice, hearings	More respect for the law
Equal treatment	More rights for blacks, women & the poor on voting, criminal justice, schools, employment, housing & consumer protection rights	More equality of opportunity and allocation on the basis of merit
Government reform	Less corruption, intimidation & incompetence	More effectiveness & efficiency
World peace & trade	Increased standards of living for developing countries	Uplifted countries become good trading partners
Social Policy		
Poverty	More rights as employees, consumers, tenants, welfare recipients & family members	The same rights apply to middle-class employees, consumers, tenants & family members
Education	More access to more education	More efficient economy from better training Less welfare
Science Policy		
Environment	More rights regarding cleaner air, water, solid waste, noise, radiation and conservation	The same rights are important to all people
Health	More access to medical help	This includes help with devastating diseases that even the rich cannot deal with

(Adapted from Nagel, 2000)

### Index Facilitation Strategies

#### Guidelines for Facilitators

1. Stay out of content
  - a. Refrain from providing ideas and opinions for the group
2. Keep it in their words
  - a. Capture verbatim what the client and resource group members say. Create “headlines” for ideas that are too long
3. Stay on track

- a. Keep moving the resource group forward
- 4. Client comes first
  - a. Make sure the client gets what they need, not what the group wants
- 5. Pay attention
  - a. Pay attention to the needs of the client and resource group. Keep aware of the development and relationship between members. Be prepared to resolve any developing issues
- 6. Celebrate progress
  - a. Make sure the client and the resource group understand what they've achieved
- 7. The client knows best
  - a. Keep your opinions at bay, don't lead or manipulate the group. The client knows their situation best (Miller et al., 2011b).

### **FourSight**

- 1. Clarify- Explore the Vision
  - a) Identify the goal, wish, or challenge
    - i. Help the client create a clear vision of a desired outcome
    - ii. Diverge by encouraging the client to list goals, wishes and challenges.
    - iii. Converge by helping the client chose one goal/wish/challenge statement
    - iv. Check that the client truly has ownership, motivation and a need for imagination by asking them to look over the list of goal/wish/challenge statements and put a check by each statement, each time it meets one of the following criteria:
      - 1. Ownership

2. Motivation
  3. Imagination
  4. Formulate the Challenge
- v. Help the client pinpoint the right challenge to address
  - vi. Have the client or resource group restate the issue from as many perspectives as possible. Use the statement starters, “How to...?” “How might...?” “In what ways might...?” or “What might be all the...?” if you get stuck, look again at the key data and try to make problem statements based on the data. Go for at least 25-30 statements.
  - vii. Choose a single challenge to work on.
  - viii. Check in with the client to see if going in the right direction
  - ix. Output:
    - A.) A single, well-defined statement of the challenge
    - B.) A flip chart poster with the challenge statement at the top
- b) Clarification Tools:
- i. Storyboarding; Data Questions; Phrase Challenges as Questions; Mind Mapping; Why? What’s Stopping You?
2. Ideate- Explore Ideas
- a) Help the group generate LOTS of options, ideas and possibilities
    - i. Diverge by thinking up a wide variety of ideas to address the challenge. But first, as the client to read aloud the vision statement, the key data and the challenge statement to the group. Reinforce the guidelines for divergent thinking.

- ii. Have the resource group come up with at least 35 ideas that might solve the client's problem. Go for 35 more. Even as you see good ideas emerge, keep pushing the group for novelty. Keep going until the client says there are enough ideas.
- iii. Converge by choosing the most promising ideas. Combine them into a narrative description that begins, "What I see myself [us] doing is...."
- iv. Check in with the client
- v. Output: Selected ideas that address the challenge, plus a written paragraph that begins, "What I see myself [us] doing is..." This narrative should detail specific actions, people, dates, and measurable results.
- vi. Ideation tools:
  - 1. Stick 'em up Brainstorming; Forced Connections; SCAMPER; Brainwriting; Excursions

### 3. Develop-Formulate Solutions

- i. Help the group refine and develop a more robust solution
- ii. Diverge by generating a list of plusses, opportunities, issues and ways to overcome any issues. If there are diverse solutions, generate criteria to evaluate them.
- iii. Converge by selecting the best new thinking that helps overcome any issues. Prioritize the diverse solutions. Make incremental improvements.
- iv. Hold the solution to the client's criteria

v. Output: An addendum to your solution statement, starting with the phrase  
“What I NOW see myself [us] doing is...”

vi. Development tools: Praise First (POINT); Evaluation Matrix; Card Sort;  
Targeting; Managing Risk

#### 4. Implement- Explore Acceptance

i. Help the client analyze what forces will help and hinder the implementation of the solution

ii. Diverge by making a list of “assisters” which could help make your solution work. Include specific ways in which you could enlist their help. Make a list of “resistors” and include ways to overcome their resistance.

iii. Converge by selecting which assisters and resistors you will focus on

iv. Encourage the client and the resource group to take a bit of time here to do the job well. It will save money in the long run

v. Output:

1. A list of assisters and resistors to incorporate into the action plan

2. A list of specific strategies for gaining or maintaining their support.

vi. Implementation tools: Assisters and Resistors; Stakeholder Analysis; Action Steps; Performance Dashboard; The Learning Cycle

(Adapted from Miller, et al., 2011b).

#### **Weisbord’s Group Conference Strategy**

##### 1. Identification of Trends & Forces

a) Identification of trends and forces in the global environment that impacts the stakeholders. Modified nominal group technique to generate trends and forces.

1. Example: Weisbord asked people to silently write their ideas and values that they deemed important and were asked to chime in publicly or post contributions to the wall. They were then asked to mark the trends and forces they deemed “hottest”. This promoted common ground and cooperative climate for the room.
2. Analysis of the Common History of the Participants
  - a) Personal milestones and milestones in the history of the organizations.
    1. Family values, persistence, a sense of humor, public service, career, a love of the organization, aspirations.
    2. “Prouds” and “Sorries”.
    3. Uncovering personal experiences that make common ground feasible.  
Develops character of the group.
    4. Example: Group posted non-organizational milestones. People discovered that they all have a common interest and love of a certain geographic area, living and playing in the outdoors, caring about the environment, a high level of education and an enjoyment of life.
    5. Discovered readiness for change
3. Stakeholder Analyses of Regional Trends and Issues
  - a.) Stakeholder groups sharing perspectives on specific issues. Analysis not done in mixed groups.
    1. Arguments and debates not permitted- Time for listening and clarifying only.

2. Every stakeholder has an opportunity to speak within a facilitated, controlled environment
3. Example: Some stakeholders commented that this was one of the first times they were able to be heard. Many common issues surfaced including not having adequate money, feeling oppression of federal regulations, and frustrations with the lack of control over certain issues.

#### 4. Identification of the Desirable Future

- a.) Mixed groups of stakeholders develop their vision of an ideal future.
  1. Consensus, and vision statement
  2. Example: Group identified major needs arising from the thesis statement;
    - a. A structure and process for collaborative decision-making about regional management;
    - b. All stakeholders sharing a common vision;
    - c. An information management process to create a common shared database;
    - d. More education and information sharing;
    - e. Legislative reform

#### 5. Action Planning & Follow Up

- a.) Outcomes surpass expectations
- b.) Facilitating action in groups
  1. Group 1- Collaborative decision-making process and structure
  2. Group 2- Explore technology and information management systems that support collaborative decision making



3. Group 3- Study educational needs
4. Group 4- Find funding for recommendations that come out of the  
other groups' work

c.) Plan to convene again

1. Set goals to broaden stakeholder participation
2. Begin to take actions recommended by the action groups

(Adapted from Weisbord, 1992).

### **Facilitation Strategy Integration with Worksheets Executive Summary**

This facilitation plan is a blend of adapted methods from Marvin Weisbord's book, *Discovering Common Ground: How Future Search Conferences Bring People Together to Achieve Breakthrough Innovation, Empowerment, Shared Vision and Collaborative Action* (1992) and the FourSight creative-problem solving tools (Miller et al., 2011a) and creativity facilitation guidebook (Miller et al., 2011b). Of all the strategies and decision-making analysis research conducted in the index, Weisbord's group conferences strategy could be realistically implemented for a wide variety of potential issues. Weisbord provides this structured facilitation plan in an exemplary case, therefore I have stripped it down to a basic outline to be used on a given public policy situation. This facilitation plan works well with policy problems because it can be applied to wicked problems and has the aptitude for super optimum solutions if done correctly. The process group in a policy situation could take form of many different key players, associates, peers, leaders, delegates or any person involved with decision making.

Weisbord (1992), describes his facilitation plan in a five-part process. He then describes an ideal facilitation team's values, philosophies and beliefs that will produce optimal solutions to the difficult problems that policy often addresses.

They are:

- People make choices and become self-regulating when conditions allow;
- Our job is structuring tasks for people to do, getting out of their way, and using our facilitation skills to help them all learn and discover together;
- Energy and commitment to action come primarily from the group not the facilitators; our focus is always the group, not us.

- We are dedicated to continuously assess the needs of the group in the here and now, adjust accordingly, and be flexible with time, tasks, and the personal needs of stakeholders.

These values are extremely important and are consistent with the creative problem-solving facilitation guidelines from the workbook *Creativity Unbound: An Introduction to Creative Process* (5th ed.) (Miller, Vehar, Firestein, Thurber & Nielson, 2011a).

These guidelines are:

1. Stay out of content
2. Keep it in their words
3. Stay on Track
4. Deliver for the Client
5. Pay Attention
6. Celebrate Progress
7. The Client Knows Best

The strategy that Weisbord uses allows for the use of divergent and convergent thinking. In combination with some of the tools from *Creativity Unbound*, this strategy could be extremely useful to policy makers and influencers. The following facilitation outline is a synthesis of FourSight's Facilitation tools and Weisbord's example of creative conference facilitation (1992, 222-226).

### **The Problem (Task Statement)**

To come up with novel and applicable solutions, or super optimum solutions (SOS) (Nagel, 2000) for policy problems, and even wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973), you can use divergent or convergent tools at each phase in the creative solving process in Weisbord's

facilitation strategy. Divergent tools allow an individual to expand all possible solutions, ideas, and thoughts about the subject. Convergent tools are used to narrow down the solutions, ideas, and thoughts to the best few that are workable and ideal. These strategies are founded on theories such as integral futures (Slaughter, 2004). The solutions would be outputs of demands and expectations of society.

The chart below provides an overview of which divergent and convergent tools that can be used for policy problem. It is important to note that this synthesized template has not been tested for validity. It is an exploratory template to be further researched for validity and reliability in public policy scenarios.

\* Please refer to the Key Terms Index for complete definitions of FourSight's CPS Facilitation Model, as well as Weisbord's Conference Strategy Stages.

<b>CPS Stage</b>	<b>Weisbord's Strategy Stage</b>		
<b>Warm Up</b>	Analysis of the Common History of the Participants		
		<b>CPS Divergent Tools</b>	<b>CPS Convergent Tools</b>
<b>Clarify</b>	Stakeholder Analysis of Regional Trends and Issues	<i>Data Questions</i>	<i>Formulate the Challenge</i>
<b>Ideate</b>	Identification of Trends & Forces	<i>Brainstorming</i>	<i>Hits</i>
<b>Develop</b>	Identification of the Desirable Future for The Issue	<i>Targeting</i>	<i>"What I NOW see us doing is..."</i>
<b>Implement</b>	Action Planning & Follow Up	<i>-Assisters and Resisters</i> <i>-Stakeholder Analysis</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>

### Facilitation Ground Rules

The FourSight (Miller et al., 2011b) facilitation practice suggests the facilitator to go over convergent and divergent ground rules for the group before beginning a session. This is extremely important and should not be missed because it sets the tone for the entire creative problem-solving process for the group. The divergent and convergent rules should not be taken lightly and are crucial for group cohesion and cooperation. They should be posted for the entirety of the facilitation session for the group to reference while going through the creative problem-solving process.

Divergent Ground Rules	Convergent Ground Rules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defer judgement</li> <li>• Strive for quantity</li> <li>• Seek wild and unusual idea</li> <li>• Build on other ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be affirmative</li> <li>• Be deliberate</li> <li>• Check your objectives</li> <li>• Improve ideas</li> <li>• Consider novelty</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011a)

Miller et al., (2011b) breaks facilitation down into divergent and convergent questioning. Divergent questions ask for many answers and ideas. Convergent questions limit responses and usually can be answered yes or no. They narrow down options and are useful for closing a creative problem-solving stage (Miller et al., 2011b).

### **Icebreaker/ Warm Up: Analysis of the Common History of Participants:**

Personal milestones and accomplishments of the individuals in the group expressed by taking a few minutes of silent reflection and recording (Weisbord, 1992). This also could be done with sharing personal values. After the group gets a chance to write their thoughts down, ask them to share, one at a time.

### **Insights & Importance**

Warm up exercises stretch thinking before the facilitation session starts with the real problem. According to Miller et al. (2011b), warm-up activities help the group practice tools and techniques; learn or review divergent ground rules; get comfortable with working together; set a climate to encourage laughter and exploration.

This icebreaker not only lets people to get to know each other and make connections with one another, but also allows everyone the chance to speak. This makes everyone feel important. It's also impactful for people to realize that they aren't so different from each other. When working on complex problems, and with a lot of people, it can be easy to lose sight of universal values and overall connection between individuals. This icebreaker begins the session on a positive note.

### Clarify: Data Questions

Data questions is a tool that asks all the questions ‘Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why?’ FourSight’s (Miller et al., 2011a) example questions are:

- What is a brief history?
- Who is involved?
- Who is the decision maker?
- How do you own this situation?
- Who might gain if the situation is resolved?
- What successes have been achieved so far?
- What obstacles have you encountered?
- How long has it been a concern?
- When would you like to see action taken?
- How might this be an opportunity?
- What has already been done?
- What is the ideal outcome?
- Where have you found help?

The more data gathered, the better. You can add more or not use any of the suggested questions. This activity can either be done as a group but is suggested to be done individually. This way, the group can share their answers with each other afterward to see different perceptions of the policy problem.

### Strategy Integration: Stakeholder Analysis

To integrate this strategy, the groups must not be mixed between opposing conflict parties. Arguments are not permitted; this reflection is done with the intent to listen and learn from each other. Every person in the group can speak (Weisbord, 1992). To merge the FourSight tool of Data Questions, you would propose the questions as ones that relate to the stakeholders in the complex problem. So, how would the solution affect the stakeholders? What do the stakeholders have to gain? etc. The goal of this tool would be to see which problems the

opposing sides have in common with each other, and to find common ground to reach a potential feasible solution. After the individuals write down their answers to the data questions, have them place check marks next to those that are deemed the most important answers (Miller et al., 2011a).

This strategy also gives members of the group another chance to speak. Since they are with their peers in their group, they can express their concerns about the situation and all collectively decide the most important data points to focus on. This promotes teamwork and confidence of the individual members, which can make them more comfortable to participate in the rest of the creative problem-solving tools and activities. More participation will lead to a more diverse array of ideas and ultimately more potential solutions.



**Worksheet: Data Questions - Stakeholder Analysis****Relevant Information:**

Brief summary of the situation, who is involved and importance of task completion.

**Stakeholder Data Questions:**

- What is a brief history of the stakeholder?
- Who else is involved and how?
- Who is the decision maker?
- How will the stakeholders gain if the problem is resolved?
- What has promoted the successes so far?
- Where have you found help?
- How long has this been a concern?
- Where would you like action to be taken?
- When/How long has this been a problem?

Place a check next to the most important data.

### **Clarification: Formulate the Challenge**

Formulating the challenge is important because although the stakeholders and people of the group may think that they know what the problem is, it can be something that they're not seeing right away. Therefore, FourSight's (Miller et al., 2011a) tool of Formulating the Challenge addresses this by clarifying the problem in a series of open-ended questions. This tool is a great follow-up to data questions because, if some of the answers were checked, or signified as important, they can be used as the basis for restating. This is a convergent tool that will help pinpoint the challenge by creating a challenge statement. The goal is to find a question that invites solutions (Miller et al., 2011a). If there are more than one groups working toward a solution, have them perform this task together. The goal is to attain one single challenge question to proceed.



### **Ideate: Brainstorming**

Brainstorming can be done in a multitude of ways and is entirely dependent on the group dynamics that are happening. For most cases, a more dynamic approach will be most beneficial and serve the relationships between conflicting sides. For more volatile groups, a more reserved approach can be taken. The reserved approach would use the worksheet provided in this plan. For a more engaging and active approach, the facilitator will need to provide writing utensils and sticky-note pads for each of the participants in the resource group. The challenge statement should be rewritten at the top of the worksheet, or on a board in front of the group. The group is then asked to start diverging and writing down ideas of solutions to solve the problem. One idea per sticky note, or line on the worksheet. The first 5-7 ideas are obvious, the next will be harder (Miller et al., 2011b). The goal is to keep ideating even when it gets hard. Every time an idea is written on a sticky-note, the individual should be asked to say the idea aloud for everyone to hear and stick it to the board, one person at a time. This activity should be done for a good amount of time, and encouragement to stretch thinking.

**Worksheet: Brainstorming**

Generate as many ideas as you can for solving the challenge. The last third of ideas is where the best new thinking emerges (Miller et al., 2011a).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_

19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_

26. \_\_\_\_\_

27. \_\_\_\_\_

28. \_\_\_\_\_

29. \_\_\_\_\_

30. \_\_\_\_\_

31. \_\_\_\_\_

32. \_\_\_\_\_

33. \_\_\_\_\_

34. \_\_\_\_\_

### Ideate: Highlighting

Since there are so many ideas on the brainstorming sheet, or poster, it is very important to narrow down the options to just a few tangible solutions. Highlighting is a convergent tool that organizes and allows the group to make decisions about the ideas presented. The first step is to ask the resource group to mark the best ideas with colored stickers or markers, this is called HITS (Miller et. al, 2011). HITs can be performed with any number of dots, or symbols, to categorize ideas in a visual way, usually in a ranking order. The second step is to organize the marked ideas into descriptive categories, or clusters (Miller et al., 2011). This can be done by first sorting by type of ideas, and then labeling the categories appropriately. The group should be given ample amount of time to discuss why and how the categories are named and labeled. The sticky-notes once again should be organized by color, or level of importance. Finally, it is time the resource group can decide which solution to move forward to by restating the challenge question to a statement. The statement should be worded as; “In order to X, I see my organization, self, etc., doing Y”. Where X is the problem statement, and Y being the proposed solution. It is also suggested to ask the client, or policy leaders, if they are okay with the solution to move forward to the next steps in the FourSight creative problem-solving process (Miller et al., 2011a)

#### Characteristics of a HIT

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solves the</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crazy, but</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workable</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenge</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>intriguing</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goes in the right</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explorable</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>direction</li> </ul>           | <p>(Adapted from Miller et al.</p>                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just feels right</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most ideal</li> </ul>    | <p>2011a)</p>  |

### **Tips for Restating**

- Elaborates on the ideas in the cluster
- Adds details as well as measurable and observable components
- Avoid summarizing the idea cluster in one sentence
- Avoid oversimplifying the cluster
- Make the general more specified
- Think of the cluster as the skeleton and use space to flesh out the ideas in it

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011a)

### **Strategy Integration: Identification of Trends and Forces**

Weisbord's (1992) example of identifying trends and forces for stakeholders uses both brainstorming and HITs loosely. These tools can be used specifically in a policy-making facilitation by focusing the brainstorming session on identifying trends and forces in a global environment that impacts the stakeholders. During the brainstorming stage, the group could be asked to divergently think and write ideas and values that seem most important to them, and then verbally speak them aloud and post the ideas to the wall with sticky-notes. Then to mark the trends and ideas that are the most important *to the stakeholder*. The whole converging process of highlighting should be done in the best interest of the stakeholders involved in the policy problem and should be included in the restatement of the problem.

This activity in any situation promotes commonalities of opposing sides and cooperation (Weisbord, 1992). It can easily be done to gauge and understand where everyone stands on specific topics in an encouraging way. It allows people to differ their judgement and see things from different perspectives.

### Develop: Targeting

Targeting is a visual tool that is interactive for the process group. It lets the group compare current options to the ideal state and gives a clear view of the gap between where the problem is from being solved (Miller et al., 2011a). It identifies where you are now, why you are off center and what would help you get to the ideal state (Miller et al., 2011a).

The following targeting steps are from FourSight (2011a).

- First, the process group should identify what kind of solution they have come to. The solution could be classified as creating a vision, selecting a solution from many, or can be evaluating performance against a goal
- Second, have the process group create an actual bullseye and either use sticky-notes, or the cut outs provided to visually see the ideal state, and the restatement of the solution
- Third, identify the pulls and pushes of the proposed solution. Instructions are provided on the following worksheet
- Rephrase the pushes into challenges such as “How to...?”, “How might...?” or “In what ways might...?”
- Ideate ways in which to address the new challenge statements
- Have the group work together as one to fill out the worksheets and create a target.



### Targeting Worksheet:

If your solution is categorized as:	Add details to your ideal state:
Creating a vision for an organization, person, or entity...	It would be nice if...
Selecting one solution, or SOS, from many...	For the solution to work entirely it should...
Evaluating performance against an achievable, political, or group goal...	The goal has been reached when...

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011a)

**Targeting Worksheet:**

Ideal State (Bring it to Life!)

*Cut out and place on the bullseye of the target*

What I see us doing....  
The best option that you are considering

*Cut and place on the target in relation to your ideal state*

### Targeting Worksheet:

Why is your solution not your ideal state?	
<b>Pulls</b> Factors/ Forces that pull the idea TOWARD the center of the target. Why it works.	<b>Pushes</b> Factors/Forces that push the idea AWAY from the center of the target. Why it doesn't work.

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011a)

### Targeting Worksheet:

Turn pushes into “How to...” statements and brainstorm ideas	
How to...	Ideas:
How to...	Ideas:
How to...	Ideas:
How to...	Ideas:
How to...	Ideas:

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011b)

### **Strategy Integration: Identification of the Desirable Future**

Weisbord's conference strategy of identification of the desirable future allows the entire process group to develop their vision for an ideal future by coming to a consensus to produce a vision statement (1992). In his example, his group identified major needs arising from the thesis statement; had all the stakeholders come to a single, common shared vision; and created an information management process to create a common shared database for more education and information sharing which would ultimately lead to legislative reform (1992). To blend both FourSight's targeting tool, and Weisbord's strategy, the facilitator would have the group provide the vision statement as the ideal future and place it in the middle of the target. Then, they would be instructed to go through the process of identifying pushing factors and pulling factors which displace the policy solution from the target. The process group would then stretch their thinking by making the "How to..." statements from the 'Pushers'. Only then would the group have the consensus of a true workable solution to the desirable future of potential legislative reform. Having the group come to a consensus of a desirable future is good but going through the process of working the solution and understanding its threats and opportunities opens the solution to a better understanding of future implementation and slowing down the policy creation process.

### **Develop: "What I Now See Us Doing...."**

Now that the process group has come to a workable and developed solution, they should rephrase the solution statement as "What I now see us doing [solution]". It is important to put this on a new sheet of paper, so that there is room to ideate ways in which the solution might be attained or notes that need to be written about the solution.

### **Implement: Assisters and Resisters**

The implementation tool of assisters and resisters by FourSight (2011b) allows the group to use both divergent and convergent thinking skills. It allows the client, or stakeholders, to see a full list of factors that can help or deter the developed solution (Miller et al., 2011b). It's a simple tool to use. Basically, create a t-chart with one side to be titled: Assisters, the opposite to be titled: Resisters. Have the client generate ideas one side at a time, then converge which factors will be focused on moving forward (Miller et al., 2011b). The following facilitation questions could be asked to help stimulate ideas under both sections of the t-chart. It is important, as the facilitator, to remember to encourage the group to keep both the end user and the end environment in mind while ideating (Miller et al., 2011b). This is especially important in policy situations because the end environment involves not only people, but economy, technology, and a wide variety of variables. Since policy issues are often complicated, it might be beneficial to make several charts for Assisters and Resisters, for each environment affected by the solution. This way the information stays organized, and all areas are covered.

The following facilitation questions are adapted from Miller et al., 2011b:

- Who or what entities, might help you with your solution?
- Who is going to need to be convinced of the merits of the solution?
- How can we gain acceptance of the solution?
- Where are you going to start?
- How are you going to fund this?
- What locations are you going to avoid?
- How might you pretest the solution?
- Who is going to resist this?

- How are people going to resist this?
- How are people going to support?
- What programs can be made to aid the solution?
- What are the deal killers?
- How can you guarantee success?
- How can you communicate the idea to others?

### **Implement: Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder Analysis is an excellent tool for policy-making, and to use by executive decision makers. It outlines exactly who you would want to influence, where they are in their acceptance of the idea, and how to get them fully on-board (Miller et al., 2011b). This can be either a group, or an individual activity. First, the group is to be instructed to identify major stakeholders in the situation. Miller et al (2011b) suggested a few questions to help the group ideate people who would be affected by the solution, they are:

- Who has an interest in the plan?
- Who is necessary to keep in consideration?
- Whose resistance would completely derail the solution?
- Who has strong opinions about the solution?
- Who is the biggest opposing party or group?
- Who has clear roles in the situation?

You can add any person, group, or entity that directly impacts the effect or implementation of the proposed solution. The following worksheet provides a space to visualize where current stakeholders are in relation to the solution, and where and how the individual or team of decision makers would want to influence the stakeholders to gain support (Miller et al., 2011b).

**Worksheet: Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder	Strongly Oppose	Moderately Oppose	Moderately Support	Strongly Support	What is most important to them?	Actions to Gain Support

(Adapted from Miller et al., 2011b).



### **Strategy Integration: Action Planning**

Weisbord's Action Planning step in his strategic plan involves the process group breaking up into four separate groups (Weisbord, 1992). He describes each group to create specific plans for different tasks that would pertain to the policy solution (Weisbord, 1992). The tasks range from collaborative decision-making and technology information management, to educational needs and fund finding (Weisbord, 1992). To integrate this strategy with the FourSight tools, the facilitator would integrate the Assistors and Resistors and the Stakeholder Analysis tools in each of the groups to organize the information generated. Since the tools are made to stretch thinking and foresight for implementation purposes, they could provide generous opportunity to each of the groups specific tasks to make the solutions developed and concrete.

To blend Weisbord's strategy with the FourSight tools, you would split the process group up into different tasks or stakeholder groups and then analyze the situation assigned, or decided upon, at a granular level with both Assistors and Resistors and Stakeholder Analysis. The results are closer to being super optimum solutions because of how specific the action plan can be to maximize results for multiple parties affected by the decision being made.

### **Follow Up**

Weisbord (1992) suggests planning a follow up meeting for the process group and facilitation team to convene again. For this follow up, there should be set goals to broaden stakeholder participation and to discuss how the actions that were recommended by the action planning groups are beginning to unfold (1992). I think that this is an excellent idea for policy makers and executive decision makers because it not only holds people accountable for their actions but involves another group participation activity. This promotes teamwork, and potentially better solutions to be examined down the road. If there are any unforeseen problems

that arise, the group can work through the problem-solving steps to work through it and try to be as successful as they can with the solution they had, or even a new solution.

There are a variety of ways that the follow up meeting could be conducted, but I believe it would be important to discuss the strengths and weaknesses that have unfolded in the time that the solution was proposed, to the present situation where some, but not all, action steps have been implemented. This way the group can understand whether to continue and solve the current issues with the old solution or start fresh with another creative problem-solving facilitated session.

The follow up meetings should be scheduled after the first facilitation is over. The dates should be agreed upon when everyone is there and focused on the problem and solution. It would be best for everyone to make it to the follow up session, or in the very least the key executive decision makers and specific stakeholders involved in the process group. Although a follow up isn't in the FourSight creative problem-solving facilitation model, it could be significant in the realm of public policy due to the volatility of politics.

### Facilitation Evaluation Questionnaire

This scale is designed to evaluate the Creativity and Public Policy Facilitation Strategy guide. It is to be used at the completion of a facilitation session. Please rate each item below on a scale from strongly effective - ineffective. Please be as accurate as possible. All answers will remain anonymous. This evaluation is intended to provide feedback to the facilitator for learning purposes.

*Strongly Effective* responses yield a near perfect approach to executing the creativity tool

*Moderately Effective* responses yield an execution which works well and has room for improvement

*Moderately Ineffective* responses yield a flawed approach, that wouldn't necessarily work for the policy problem solving session

*Strongly Ineffective* responses yield a completely poor execution, and requires reworking

Rating:				
	Strongly Effective	Moderately Effective	Moderately ineffective	Strongly Ineffective
<b>Organization:</b>				
Icebreaker activity is clearly defined	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarification tools are clearly defined and outlined (Including worksheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ideation tools are clearly defined and outlined (Including worksheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development tools are clearly defined and outlined (Including worksheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation tools are clearly defined and outlined (Including worksheets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, facilitation plan is outlined clearly. Objectives are explained thoroughly so that the process group would understand what they are about to participate in. Instructions are clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes:				

Rating:				
	Strongly Effective	Moderately Effective	Moderately ineffective	Strongly Ineffective
<b>Creative Outcomes:</b>				
Clarification tools clarify the problem while inducing divergent and convergent thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ideation tools allow the group to come up with a wide variety of solutions while inducing divergent and convergent thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development tools allow the group to consider all the variables of proposed solution while inducing divergent and convergent thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation tools allow the group to come up with a planned strategy to execute the proposed solution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, the facilitation plan will yield unusual and useful ideas. Creative thinking will be invoked, and the client will receive solutions that address the problem in new effective ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes:				
<b>Execution:</b>				
This plan will induce teamwork and build communicative bridges between opposing parties to a policy circumstance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This facilitation plan can be used in a real policy or executive decision-making situation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, the facilitation plan has a clear execution and will be able to be executed by not only creative professionals, but decision makers and policy leaders to use at their disposal to achieve creative solutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Notes:				

## SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

### **Content & Process Learning**

I started this project with limited knowledge of policy process. I had previously studied public budgeting, and been exposed to problems in the political arena, and written papers that express the need for exploration in this area of research. But, that had very little effect on understanding the intricacies of the policy creation process. This project took me much longer than what I originally anticipated, and as I created my products, I had to trim a lot out of my original intentions because it was either too in depth, or not needed at all. Through this process, I learned a great deal about time management, process, and content. Both the index and facilitation plan allowed me to explore and develop tools that could potentially be significantly beneficial to high level decision makers.

### **The Index**

I created the index to make a foundation of basic knowledge of the two fields I wanted to explore, public policy and creativity. The index allowed me to get a little bit of footing and a more developed understanding of what really goes on in the policy process. The index was an eye-opener in a sense that policy is such a vast, ever changing, and not-straightforward area of government. I had never really considered why policy gets created, just how it is created. Being exposed to the different casualties was interesting.

Along with learning the causalities of policy, I learned a lot about the different ways in which policy is made, and who it is made by. There isn't just one person that creates policy, but it is made from a variety of sources including the judges and courts, legislatures, and executives. It's made in courthouses, city halls, community meetings, and begins with the public expressing

a need. Knowing these basic things puts me in a better position to sell my facilitation plan to the key players and develop stronger methods.

I also developed a better understanding, and stronger philosophical stance on my theory of creativity. Having to define the different factors of facilitation, and revisiting the basic theories was beneficial because honestly, I forgot a lot of the little tricks and reasonings behind FourSight's process. I haven't visited my facilitation book in a while, so with this project let me tweak the tools to be used in a policy solution situation I revisited basic concepts and therefore gained skill in facilitating.

### **The Facilitation Strategy**

The facilitation strategy was a transformative process. It began with what seemed like a simple concept and grew into something so much more. As I worked on it, I began to think that I wanted this product to be something that a professional facilitator could use to guide and host sessions with, and something that a decision maker could reference and use in the future for smaller projects as well. With that perspective, I thought it was important to not only explain the tool, but why it is appropriate and how to use it in a specific policy session. This included making the worksheets to use in the future for a decision maker to reference and provide guidance or insights.

I think the most important pieces of the facilitation strategy are the integration pieces that wrap up the tool section. It is within the integration explanations that the policy maker will understand how to truly use the tool to their advantage. Weisbord's examples in his book were so revolutionary in this process because they tie the concepts of creative problem solving, facilitation, and policy making.

The facilitation strategy brought this project to life. It tied together the referenced material in the index. It gives academic reasoning and justification to how creative problem solving can be implemented in the public policy arena.

### **The Evaluation Matrix**

The evaluation matrix for the facilitation strategy is a way for the facilitator to get feedback and learn how to improve their methods. It also scales the effectiveness of the facilitation guide, so that it can be reworked, or sections could be remade entirely if shown to be ineffective. I think this evaluative measure is extremely important, and often overlooked. In my opinion, facilitators in any domain should be evaluated to improve their future facilitations and for their groups to see a decent return on their investment of time. For my project, the evaluation matrix gave me some critical insights from a legal professional who is trained in creative problem solving. These insights provided me in understanding where to go next in this process. Although I would have liked a creativity professional to also rate my plan, I am happy with the results I got from Professor Barbra Kavanough.

Another significant piece of the evaluation from Professor Kavanough was her comment and critique of the facilitation plan. I had asked her to read through the facilitation plan and comment on where she would potentially change things. She did, and provided comments throughout the sections on the strengths, rewordings, and her opinion of efficacy. This was enlightening because it validated my project and shows that this plan could potentially be used in an impactful way. She helped me create a vision for the future of this project through her professional experience and insights.

## SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION

This project was exploratory. Not only did I accomplish my primary goal of understanding what public policy was, and its relation to creative problem solving, I developed tangible products that can be used by both non-creativity and creativity professionals to use. A significant part of developing my goals moving forward was my discussion with Professor Kavanaugh. Barbra is a lawyer and professor that has been trained in creativity. I had reached out to her to look at my facilitation plan and to evaluate it using the evaluation matrix. As stated above, she went through both the facilitation plan and evaluation matrix and critiqued both. Aside from the formal critiques that she generously provided, I gained significant insights in our 30-minute conversation. Barbra provided me with a more concrete vision into the potential and possibilities of the facilitation plan in the future as well as provided local contacts to reach out to for even more guidance. She also provided some examples of different ways creative problem solving has been used in community discussions in the past. Whereas I thought this field was untapped, I now know that others are actively trying to pursue different strategies as well. This informal discussion gave me the confidence to go forward and pursue different community programs to potentially engage with in the future.

As for my facilitation plan, I believe that it is very solid in the academic research and reasoning. To take it to the next level, I'll have to develop it further for the intended user, which would be a legislator or politician. Therefore, I will have to design and market it in such a way to promote the end user's self-interest and/or political gain. Because in a way, I would be selling this guide to these professionals. As a part of that I need to better understand what decision makers would really want from it. So the facilitation plan would have to be less academic, and more client friendly for practical use.



Moving forward, I plan on hosting a series of discussions with local decision makers and academia to better understand the people behind the policy, now that I know the process in a basic way. This is exciting because I was at first unclear about the direction I would go in next. Now I have an even more accurate depiction of the environment and people I need to get in contact with to bring this plan into action.

There is a future in creativity and innovation in policy making. Creative thinking skills allow an individual to see more options in front of them when confronted with a problem. Therefore, if a policy maker is presented with more solutions, they have more power to create tangible change, and ultimately keep their position. In the future I plan on not only getting a better understanding from the policy makers point of view, but potentially creating a facilitation plan that is geared more to play to the immediate benefits that it can bring to both policy maker and community. This could range from community involvement, to increased productivity and team communication. This project has provided insights to the depth and breadth of ways in which creative facilitation can be implemented.

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Appendix A  
Professional Biography:  
Professor Barbra Kavanaugh  
Georgetown Law

*This professional summary has been provided by the university of Georgetown Law, Washington DC. It is derived from the faculty profile page, retrieved from <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/faculty/kavanaugh-barbra-a.cfm#>*

Barbra A. Kavanaugh  
Adjunct Professor of Law  
B.S., Seton Hall University; J.D., State University of New York at Buffalo

Professor Kavanaugh was the executive director of the Employment Justice Center from 2011 to 2015, and is now researching the relationships between workers centers and legal programs, including law school clinic programs, for interested foundations. She also works as an interim executive director in the Washington D.C. and Buffalo N.Y. metropolitan areas.

As the Executive Director of the Employment Justice Center, Professor Kavanaugh and the EJC staff served thousands of low-wage workers through expanded clinic programs and litigation. The EJC also supported the development of El Comité Trabajadores, a group of Spanish-speaking workers activists and advocates.

Before joining the Employment Justice Center, Professor Kavanaugh lived and worked in Buffalo NY for 30 years. She provided civil representation to low-income clients at Neighborhood Legal Services. Although she specialized in landlord-tenant and housing discrimination work, Professor Kavanaugh worked in all areas of civil poverty law including family, public benefits, consumer and special education. While supervising NLS' housing unit, she was lead counsel in *Comer v. Cisneros*, 37 F.3d 775 (2d Cir. 1994), a challenge to race-based discrimination in public and subsidized housing in and around Buffalo N.Y.

Professor Kavanaugh also served three years as a City Councilmember-at-large in Buffalo. An outspoken advocate for the arts, and public art, Professor Kavanaugh also helped to pass living wage and landlord licensing legislation in Buffalo NY. Recognizing that Buffalo is a waterfront city, Professor Kavanaugh also passed set-back and easement policies to protect and maintain public access to the water.

Professor Kavanaugh also served in appointed office as the Assistant Attorney General in Charge of the New York State Attorney General's office, and as law clerk to the Honorable John F. O'Donnell, J.S.C. Judge O'Donnell was at that time the first judge to preside over the Erie County, N.Y., Integrated Domestic Violence Court.

Appendix B  
Additional Research  
Income Inequality  
Causes & Potential Solutions

*The following research was done preliminary to this project. It is relevant to express the need for education policy reform to aid in the relief of income inequality. Since income inequality is such a debated policy topic, this paper is relevant to express the significant impact creative problem solving may have on wicked problems, and the need for super optimum solutions.*

### **Income Inequality Causes & Potential Solutions**

Income inequality is the distribution of incomes between people, groups or regions within a country or the world (Odekon, 2015). It is the measurable gap between the rich and poor economic classes. Income inequality is an important concept to understand because it reflects not only the economic climate of a country but shows the likelihood of prosperity and opportunity for the citizens as well. The disbursement of income between people who have higher incomes to those who have lower within a country is often referred to as vertical inequality (Odekon, 2015). A fundamental concept of income inequality is social mobility. Social mobility, as defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica (2017), is the movement of individuals, families, or groups through a system of social hierarchy or stratification. It has been observed that in Western nations, the new upper class is compromising economic opportunity and mobility due to the increasing inequality of educated workers with access to technology and those who are poorly educated who lack access to such technologies (Social Mobility, 2017). The occupational, educational and technological structure around the world is transforming rapidly and the financial growth rate isn't matching these experiences evenly. This produces human capital problems, and a polarization of extremely rich to poor.

Every country has its specific policies and cultural differences that contribute to accommodating this transforming climate. The ways in which each country's government addresses these issues directly impacts the quality of life for its citizens. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014a), is an intergovernmental economic

organization of 35-member countries which provides a platform to compare policy experiences, identify good practices and coordinate international policies (“About the OECD,” 2017). The OECD provides reports and suggestions to promote solutions to common economic problems based on analysis of independent and evidence-based recommendations with a focus of understanding critical global issues (“About the OECD,” 2017). Member countries of OECD include the United States, Norway, Germany, Canada, Mexico, Japan, the United Kingdom, France, Greece, Australia and New Zealand. According to the OECD (2014), the gap between the rich and poor is at its highest level in most of its member countries in the last 30 years. So much so that the richest 10% of the population earn 9.5 times more than the poorest 10% (OECD, 2014). This statistic negatively impacts the world’s economic, educational and technological growth. It is estimated that rising inequality will stunt economic growth of OECD countries .35% per year for the next 25 years, with a cumulated loss in GDP of 8.5% at the end of the period (OECD, 2014a). Income inequality negatively impacts growth because it undermines educational opportunities for disadvantaged individuals (OECD, 2014a). These statistics suggest that the current state of income inequality is hampering human capital. It also suggests that reducing income inequality around the world could result in more social mobility and individual opportunity.

The United States, in comparison to the rest of the OECD countries is significantly higher in terms of income inequality. The poorest 10% of Americans has recently fell 15%, from 2000-2010, while the richest 1% now accounts for 20% of the national pre-tax income (OECD, 2014b). The income of the richest 10% of Americans is 16 times as large as for the poorest 10%, while the OECD average is 9.6 (OECD, 2014b) Also, according to OECD (2014a), income inequality in the United States has grown at a stronger pace than the OECD average. In



comparison to the rest of the world, 47% of income growth has benefited the top 1% in the United States while in Canada it is 37%, in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom it is 20% (OECD, 2014b). It is clearly shown statistically that the United States has a much more severe wage gap than all other OECD countries except for Chile and Mexico. The United State shows such a high gap between wages because of numerous policies and a unique economic climate. The trend of the increasing income gap in the United States has been shown to be concentrated in three periods: from the 1980s to the early 1990s; during the early 2000s and now since the late 2000s (OECD, 2014b). There are many contributing factors to these concentrated periods. Although it is difficult to put weight to the different factors, there has been much research to both technology, and financialization with the concept of winner-take-all markets. These two factors significantly impact the widening gap of incomes in the United States since the 1970s.

Technological advancement has driven society toward extraordinary possibilities in terms of knowledge, innovation, and exploration. It also has tremendous impact on the economy both in opportunity and growth. Research has shown that technology is one of the most identifiable sources of income inequality in the United States (Dadush, Dervis & Milsom, 2012). This is due to the concept of skill based technological change, or the trend of computers having the cognitive and physical abilities to perform low skill-based tasks, ultimately replacing jobs (Dadush et al., 2012). OPEC names the profound transformation of the labor market, due to technology, as an underlying driver of inequality (OECD, 2014b). Technology was the leading cause of the high-skilled labor demand from 1970-1998 (Dadush et al., 2012). The United States has seen a significant impact on income inequality from technological advancements in comparison to other Western countries because of the lack of educational attainment (Dadush et al., 2012). This

means that Americans have not placed emphasis or attained the necessary skills at the same accelerated rate of technological innovation. Because it is harder to attain specialized education to train in jobs to utilize newer technologies, jobs become automated and replaced, adding to the income gap.

Financialization is a relatively new term to help describe the economic climate of the United States. According to Ebner (2017),

“The notion of financialization addresses the theme of the increasing dominance of financial markets and their actors and logics in the global affairs of contemporary capitalism across its diverse national and regional manifestations. In this manner, financialization is identified as a key causal factor in the comprehensive economic, social, and political changes that have shaped the world ever since the early 1970s...”

Since 1979 the size of the financial sector of the GDP in the US has drastically risen as the manufacturing sector has declined (Dadush et al., 2012). In accordance, among the top .1% of income distribution, the financial sector’s salaries have risen from 11% to 18% between 1979 to 2005 (Dadush et al., 2012). An even more staggering statistic is the wage disbursement of CEO to typical employee. This pay ratio has risen from 42:1 in 1980, to 107:1 in 1990, to 325:1 in 2010 (Dadush et al., 2012). OECD has named the wage gap the single most important direct driver of the growing divide (OECD, 2014b). This extreme ratio contributes to the increased competition of college graduates to a limited number of finance jobs. Therefore, the theory of the winner-takes-all culture is ever present in the US economy. Financialization is a contributor to income inequality problems like social mobility because there is no opportunity for those who lose in the winner-take-all scheme to make anything close to the ‘winners’.

Since these two factors have such a dramatic impact on income inequality, they in-turn impact culture, opportunity and quality of life for most citizens in the United States. There are viable solutions to help close the gap on income inequality, as demonstrated by other Western nations. Income inequality will never be fully resolved, but it is at utmost importance to relieve the harsh consequences of letting it advance to the level that it is today. The United States is leading in GDP in the world, but many Americans do not reap the benefits of this statistic. It is common for the average citizen in the United States to believe in the ‘American Dream’ which is a belief that hard work leads to a fulfilled and successful life. However, this is not and will never be a reality to many Americans because of the extremity of the inequality. The middle class is steadily slipping into poverty levels while the super-rich steadily remain comfortably in the top 1%.

There needs to be immediate action taken in the United States to close this gap and allow hard working Americans the prosperity they deserve. OECD provides analysis and examples of potential solutions to aid in closing the income gap. In the OECD inequality report for the United States (2014b) the major suggestions for inequality solutions are investing in human capital, boosting employment and career prospects, reforms of tax and benefit policies, and promotion of access to public services. These pillars are crucial for strategizing policy which would renew opportunities for the middle and poor classes. The most important of the pillars that will specifically address the technology race and financialization is the investment in human capital. OECD specifies that addressing education by promoting policies to provide opportunities to skill training and early childhood educational development is crucial to reversing the trend in equality (OECD, 2014b). Education is important because it closes the gap in the race between technology and skill. Dadush et al. (2012) explains this by stating, “the most effective thing the

United States can do both to impact the level of distribution of income and to enhance social mobility is to have an effective, inclusive, and equal opportunity-oriented system of education and skill formation.” By allowing an investment in education, the rest of the pillars will follow because people will have access to better-paid jobs and reduce inequality. Change begins with educated and skilled people. The United States needs to create policies that promote education to begin the process of closing the gap of inequality.

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Appendix C  
Table Permissions

Jade Costello  
 SUNY Buffalo State College  
 Masters Project  
 May 2018

04/18/2018

Dr. Gerard Puccio  
 1300 Elmwood Ave  
 Buffalo, NY 14222

Dear Dr. Puccio,

I am requesting permission to reprint figure 2.1 from the following work.

Author: Puccio, G. J., Mance, M., Murdock, M. C.,  
 Title of the work: *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change*.  
 ISBN: 978-1412977579  
 Year of publication: 2011

A copy of the material I would like to use is below



I would like to include the above material as part of the following project that I am preparing:

Author: Jade Costello

Title of work: Exploring Creative Problem Solving and Public Policy

A Project in Multidisciplinary Studies and Creative Studies

Publication date: May 2018

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Date